

**Town of Auburn  
Board of Selectmen  
September 20, 2017**

**Selectmen Present:** James Headd, Richard Eaton & Dale Phillips

**Also Present:** Road Agent Michael Dross, Rene LaBranche of Stantec Consulting, and William Herman, Town Administrator

Mr. Headd called the public meeting to order at 11:05 a.m.

**Appointments with the Board**

Update on Status of Griffin Mill Bridge

Mr. LaBranche reported that following the Board's direction from their September 11<sup>th</sup> meeting, Stantec Consulting performed a field inspection of the Griffin Mill Road Bridge on September 12<sup>th</sup>. The inspection verified the September 5<sup>th</sup> notice from the NH Department of Transportation that serious and advanced deterioration of the steel stringers was noted, particularly in the webs near the bottom flanges. Ongoing deterioration will continue to compromise the integrity of the steel stringers until they are replaced. A structural analysis was performed to investigate whether the stringers can continue to support a further reduced vehicular live loads. This analysis found the Griffin Mill Road Bridge cannot continue to reliably support even reduced vehicular loads, and Stantec concurs with the NHDOT recommendation to close the bridge.

Mr. LaBranche noted the two interior stringers are in the worst shape, but the two outer stringers are not in such better shape in order to make up for the structural loss of the other two stringers.

Stantec performed a preliminary investigation to assess whether a temporary strengthening would allow the bridge to remain open at the current 10-ton load posting. The possible project would involve placing two large steel beams in the roadway, each adjacent to the timber bridge curbs, to span over the bridge and carry the vehicle load via a transverse underslung steel beam placed at the mid-span of the existing stringers. It is anticipated the large steel beams would be approximately 40-feet long and would be supported on the approach roadways beyond the ends of the bridge. Threaded rods would be suspended through holes in the timber bridge deck to create a cradle for the underslung beam. The underslung beam would be pulled and wedged tight to the underside of the existing stringers. The remaining roadway width would be approximately 9'-6" to 10'-0" and does not currently provide guardrail or protection for the strengthening beams. Further refinement of this concept may be able to better incorporate these details.

Mr. LaBranche indicated he had made contact with contact with Cohen Steel in Concord to secure a cost estimate for the steel required for the temporary bridge support and was told the cost would be approximately \$5,338.80. In addition, they contacted Geddes Movers of Bow and were provided a budgetary cost of \$17,000 to \$20,000 to install everything. So the temporary measure would cost a total of approximately \$26,000.

Stantec advises it is important to note this strengthening is conceptual in nature and should also be considered to be a temporary interim measure. He indicated it might provide adequate support until the bridge is scheduled for State funding for replacement.

Mr. LaBranche noted the other option is to close the bridge and complete the temporary access road / driveway to the property until such time as the bridge is replaced. He indicated the temporary access road / driveway could be part of the total cost for the bridge project as the temporary access would be required for the construction project, while the temporary interim measure to keep the bridge open would not be eligible for funding through the Municipal Bridge Aid program. He also indicated the Town should petition the NHDOT to see if the Griffin Mill Bridge could be moved up the schedule for funding in the Municipal Bridge Aid program due to potential closure. Mr. LaBranche said the Town might consider handling the replacement work under NHDOT's advanced construction process, but the Town would run the risk of there not being State funds available and not getting reimbursed in a later year.

Mr. Eaton indicated he favored implementing the temporary access road / driveway at this point and closing the bridge. He was not in favor of the temporary repair to the bridge to keep it open. He felt the Board needed to meet with the Fuscus as quickly as possible to determine a course of action.

Mrs. Phillips and Mr. Headd agreed they should meet with the Fuscus as soon as possible to be able to move on whichever means of access is agreed upon. They felt the construction of the temporary access road / driveway was the preferable approach, but they would consider either means moving forward.

Mr. Herman noted the Board should request NHDOT consider advancing Auburn on the schedule of Red Listed Bridges if the bridge is closed, but he indicated it is not likely the Griffin Mill Bridge would be a high priority due to the low volume of traffic it has. He also noted the Town has its 20% share of bridge construction funds in hand, but if the decision was made to attempt advance construction prior to the availability of State funding, the Town would need to raise the remaining 80% share of funds through a Town Meeting appropriation.

Through discussion, the Board members agreed the options appeared to be establishing a temporary road / driveway access and closing the bridge to traffic, or implementing the interim temporary repair to keep the bridge open. They agreed the

Town should ask the NHDOT for consideration in being moved up on the schedule of funding in the Municipal Bridge Aid program, but performing advanced construction without the guarantee of reimbursement was not a good course of action for the Town.

The Board requested scheduling a meeting as quickly as possible with the Fuscus, with their preference being sometime during the day or late afternoon on Monday, September 25<sup>th</sup>.

## **Adjourn**

***Mr. Eaton moved to adjourn; Mrs. Phillips seconded the motion; all were in favor, the meeting ended at 11:41 a.m.***